

LITERARY ENCYCLOPEDIAS

15-20 pages + image appendix (100 pts)

Due February 18, 2019

TEXTS:

The Faerie Queene, Book I, Canto 1 by Edmund Spenser (7 persons)

Paradise Lost, Book I, by John Milton (7 persons)

Read the material (preferably together). Each person in the group will be responsible for one of the components/research elements. Your work should then be combined and compiled into one coherent “encyclopedia entry.” While each group member will have specific project goals, research among members will often (and necessarily) overlap. Be sure to share your research and writing throughout the process and to speak regularly about progress. We will be spending time in the library during the coming weeks to learn about specific resource material and research skills.

ROLES:

The historian

- 1) Research generally the time period in which the text was written for significant information related to the author’s biography, the contemporary political climate, and general cultural literacy (especially literary culture).
- 2) Chase and explain specific historical allusions.

The theologian

- 1) Research the general religious culture of the time period in which the text was written, including (and especially) related to the political climate.
- 2) Explain the particular religious outlook/point of view of the text (including the author’s religious background) within the wider contemporary religious culture, as well as identify any specifically religious allusions.

The publisher

- 1) Summarize the genre, plot, narrative action, and main characters (and, where applicable, their possible counterparts in history).
- 2) Provide a history of publication and explanation of the text’s place in the “literary canon.” Under what conditions was the text produced? Who was the most likely original audience? Were there multiple editions or revisions of the work? Why has the text been considered a “classic” for so long?

The close reader

- 1) Identify symbols and imagery; explain their significance in relation to both the text and wider historical/cultural context.
- 2) Explicate the text’s use of allegory (meaning in action).

The mechanic

- 1) Identify the meter, rhyme scheme, and any recurring / significant poetic devices, structural innovations, or notable / unfamiliar diction.
- 2) Explicate the specific use of four stylistic elements and their effect on the aesthetic and meaning of the text.

The critic

- 1) Choose a theme or question that the text approaches and explain how it develops within the narrative.
- 2) Compile a bibliography of sources related to the text and its contexts.

The illustrator

- 1) Compile an appendix of images associated with the text, including depictions of historically significant events either concurrent with its publication or directly alluded to in the text; include also any illustrations of the narrative throughout its publication and critical history (at least 20 images with captions).
- 2) Design and develop an image unique to your group's interpretation of the text to accompany your encyclopedic entry.